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DIRECTORATE OF
INTELLIGENCE

Intelligence Memorandum

*Jean Claude Duvalier's Presidency:
An Interim Report*

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8 June 1971
No. 1700/71

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
Directorate of Intelligence
8 June 1971

INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

Jean-Claude Duvalier's Presidency: An Interim Report

Summary

The performance of Francois Duvalier's succession mechanism and of President Jean-Claude Duvalier has already surpassed general expectations. Several potential competitors for supreme political power are now participating directly or indirectly in the new government, and it remains to be seen whether all of them will decide their own interests can best be furthered by preserving Jean-Claude Duvalier's presidency or by moving against it. Despite the disadvantages that the current governing arrangement presents to any aspirants to power, it appears well suited to provide them with time to decide on their future course.

The six-week-old government of President Jean-Claude Duvalier, however, faces difficulties that, individually or in combination, could destroy it. The chief executive is young and inexperienced. Important members of the administration upon whose cooperation the government depends may be unwilling or unable to keep their tests of strength, maneuvers for advantage and disagreement within bounds. The Duvalier regime's reaction to real, implied, or suspected activity from internal political opposition or from outsiders--the exiles, the Cuban Government, or the Dominican military--could alter or destroy its equilibrium, with unforeseeable consequences. So far, however, no threat from any of these sources is apparent.

Note: This memorandum was prepared by the Office of Current Intelligence and coordinated within CIA.

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Luckner Cambronne
Secretary of State for
Interior and National Defense



Adrien Raymond
Secretary of State
for Foreign Affairs



**Brigadier General
Claude Raymond**
Chief of Staff of the
Armed Forces



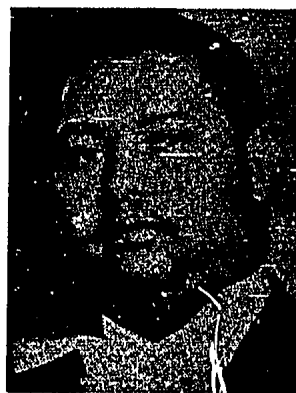
Max Dominique
Ambassador to France;
brother-in-law of the
President



**Madame Simone
Ovide Duvalier**
Mother of President
Jean-Claude Duvalier



**Marie-Denise
Duvalier Dominique**
Private secretary to her
brother, the President



**President-for-Life
Jean-Claude Duvalier**
Age 20

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The Situation

1. In death, as in life, Francois Duvalier continues to surprise and confound, for it is generally agreed that he wrote and cast the drama now in progress in the presidential palace. The explosion of the myth that Duvalier's death would touch off a riot for power, an upsurge of popular violence, exile invasions, and a US Marine landing is the only firecracker thus far detonated by the transfer of power in Haiti. The political situation could change overnight, however, especially if someone in the establishment tries precipitately to outmaneuver the others.

2. Haiti has no political institutions that allow rivals for power to contest the issue without the risk of bloodshed, destructive disorders, and other violence. An unforeseeable event--a natural disaster, or the death of one of the key figures in the government, for example--could radically change the makeup of the existing power structure. The care Francois Duvalier took to legitimize the succession arrangement shows that he fully appreciated the danger inherent in Haiti's free-form political traditions. The exemplary behavior of his political heirs suggests that they understand the dangers, too. It is uncertain how long the several clever and ambitious men and women whom everyone expected to vie for the top job will continue to cooperate to keep a 20-year-old political novice, Jean-Claude Duvalier, in office. Their continued cooperation will depend upon expediency, upon their ability to preserve the current equilibrium, and upon the political development of the President. So far no member of the government has attempted to seize power because of the disaster that would follow any ill-conceived move and the fear of outside intervention.

3. Continuation of the modest economic recovery that began in 1968 will be to the material and political advantage of members of the government, but probably will not affect the living standards of Haitians generally. On 29 April, President Jean-Claude Duvalier, in his first speech to the National Legislature, dwelt at length on the state of the economy. The government undoubtedly intends to project the image of a responsible administration prepared to do something to develop the country. Neither the past nor the present government

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would jeopardize its political security in the interests of economic development, however.

Who's Who

4. It is safe to assume that every Haitian of current political consequence is a Duvalierist, of convenience if not of conviction. The few facts known about their past histories and their present jobs, suggest that the major figures in the new government are: Luckner Cambronne, Minister of Interior and National Defense; Adrien Raymond, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs; his brother General Claude Raymond, Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces; Marie-Denise Duvalier Dominique, private secretary to her brother, as she was to her late father; her husband Max, Ambassador to France; and Madame Simone Ovide Duvalier, widow of the late president and mother of the incumbent. Others who themselves may not aspire to the top job but whose support would be useful are: Colonel Breton Claude, Commander of the Dessalines Battalion; Colonel Gracia Jacques, Commander of the Presidential Guard; and Colonel Franck Romain, Commander of the Military Department of the Port-au-Prince Police. Others whose support might be useful are Antonio Andre, president of the National Bank of Haiti and one of the President's 13 non-ministerial advisers, and possibly Clovis Desinor who, although not in the government, figured prominently in the Duvalier regime for many years. There are probably others whose discretion under Duvalier has concealed their ambitions.

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11. Although the Haitian military is not the king-maker it was before Francois Duvalier, its support is vital to the survival of any Haitian Government. Duvalier destroyed the military's political power and successfully prevented its resurgence by skillfully and mercilessly manipulating personalities and forces. He also set up a counter-balance in the National Security Volunteers (VSN), a national militia under his personal direction. Roughly equivalent to the army in size but much inferior in arms, organization, and discipline, the VSN was nevertheless effective under Duvalier's strict control. The new government is sharply curtailing the wide-ranging authority the VSN exercised under the elder Duvalier.

12. Jean-Claude has given pay raises to the ranks and promotions to some officers to ensure the military's continued loyalty. A high degree of purpose and skill--of which there is no evidence--would be required by any individual or group to break the habit of subservience to which Duvalier accustomed the military. The Ton-Ton Macoute, a loose aggregation of political activists whom

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Francois Duvalier used as spies, informers, and assassins, has grown less active in recent years. It now appears to have little significance.

Will It Last?

13. The stylistic innovations introduced in the first days of the new administration--open arms to the world press, the conditional amnesty to the exiles, presidential accessibility--surprised and somewhat disarmed those long accustomed to the secretive Duvalier style. The new approach was probably intended to impress foreign governments with the legitimacy and seriousness of purpose of the new regime and to dispel the forbidding image of Haiti commonly held abroad. It probably was intended to produce a favorable impact at home, too. Although the Haitian masses have no political importance, it could be useful to the new government to engage the skeptical interest, if not the good will, of the merchants and middle class citizens of Port-au-Prince.

14. There is no evidence that either an exile invasion or an upsurge of internal political agitation is imminent, but Haitian history strongly suggests that neither should be entirely ruled out. If either or both materialize, the government would probably unite even more closely to resist. The government could probably succeed, but repressive military measures would be inevitable and could blight domestically and internationally the positive effects of innovations.

15. Stresses are inevitable within the government, and fear or ambition could wreck this carefully devised mechanism. Nevertheless, the present distribution of roles may prove to be in the best interests of those involved, and there is no evidence that a coup by a member of the government is imminent. Each major participant would like to become more independent of the others, but if maneuverings for advantage were not entirely successful, they would probably impel other factions to unite against him. As long as the tests of strength are kept discreet and the participants conclude that no one has clear advantage, the present government could endure for some time, and Jean-Claude

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Duvalier could become President for Life in fact as well as in form. From that point, his continued survival would depend upon his own political cunning.

16. Whatever the ultimate outcome, Jean-Claude Duvalier's legal accession to the presidency prevented a contest for power. It also affords the leading political aspirants a unique opportunity to work out their political futures. If and when Jean-Claude is replaced, his successor will in a sense have won the presidency by outwitting and out-maneuvering his rivals.

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